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News Release

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Strength at Home at VA associated with reduced intimate partner violence

BOSTON – Strength at Home intervention in VA health care is associated with reductions in intimate partner violence, according to research published in JAMA Network Open Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

Intimate partner violence, or IPV, is a serious public health issue that is associated with trauma, mental and physical health difficulties, and other health disparities. Strength at Home, or SAH, is a 12-week trauma-informed and cognitive behavioral group intervention to help prevent the use of IPV in relationships. Previous studies have provided evidence of SAH's effectiveness, but patient outcomes from implementation in organized health care systems had not been previously examined.

“The effort to provide comprehensive intimate partner violence programming at every VA hospital is an alternative model for addressing violence as a public health issue,” said Dr. Casey Taft, director of the Strength at Home program, senior author on the study, psychologist with the National Center for PTSD at VA Boston Healthcare System, and professor at Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine. “Our results suggest that IPV intervention at VA facilities was successful and that expansion to other healthcare systems may be warranted.”

The study evaluated data collected as part of treatment submitted by clinicians at 73 VA healthcare facilities between Dec. 11, 2015, and Sept. 24, 2021. Patients were 1,754 Veterans seeking care aimed at addressing their use of aggression in intimate relationships. They completed one pretreatment assessment, and one follow-up assessment in the immediate weeks after group completion.

Patient outcomes after participation in SAH intervention suggested that the program was associated with reductions in IPV behaviors, PTSD symptoms and alcohol misuse.

The study is available at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2802385>

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